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**News Release**

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**Līhu'e man sentenced to year in jail for attacking endangered sea turtle**

LĪHU'E – Prosecuting Attorney Justin F. Kollar announced that Lance Kaaumoana, age 36, was sentenced this week to serve one year in jail for attacking an endangered Pacific green sea turtle in April 2017.

The sentence was handed down in the Environmental Court by the Honorable Judge Michael K. Soong after he heard arguments from Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Anthony Herndon and Kaaumoana's public defender.

Officers from the Kaua'i Police Department and the Department of Land and Natural Resources were called to the Nāwiliwili jetty area on April 15, 2017 after witnesses saw Kaaumoana repeatedly stabbing the turtle with a knife. The turtle was seriously injured but survived the incident and released back into the wild several days later. Kaaumoana was cited for violating section 13-124-11 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes and received the maximum sentence for the misdemeanor offense. In July 2017, Kaaumoana pled no contest to the charge.

"In Hawai'i we take the protection of our marine environment very seriously. This was a truly senseless attack on a peaceful animal and we are satisfied that the Judge imposed the maximum sentence," stated Kollar. "We thank our partners at the Kaua'i Police Department, the DLNR investigators for their swift response, as well as Kaua'i District Aquatic Biologist Don Heacock for his efforts to rehabilitate the injured turtle. We will continue to vigorously prosecute these cases."

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